

IN THE CLAIMS

The status of the claims as presently amended is as follows:

1. (*Currently Amended*) A vibration wave driven apparatus comprising:

a driven member; and

a vibrator comprising:

an elastic member having one surface opposed to said driven member, and another surface, said elastic member having a plurality of spaced contact parts formed on the one surface and disposed in contact with said driven member, said elastic member being formed of a single member; and

an electromechanical conversion element joined to the another surface of said elastic member[[:];,

~~wherein at least one of said elastic member and said electromechanical conversion element has a portion thereof opposed to said driven member,~~

wherein said portion having elastic member has at least one recessed part formed therein at a location other than said contact parts, whereby cutout that extends completely through said elastic member to expose part of said electromechanical conversion element at a location where the another surface of said elastic member is joined to said electromechanical conversion element,

wherein portions of said elastic member adjacent to said cutout form the spaced contact parts,

wherein said at least one cutout is opposed to said driven member, and

wherein said elastic member is disposed in contact with said driven member only at said spaced contact parts.

2. (*Currently Amended*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said elastic member has a second portion ~~not opposed to~~ extending laterally away from said driven member, said second portion being flush with said spaced contact parts.

3. (*Currently Amended*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said elastic member is formed from a metal plate material ~~by press punching or by an etching process.~~

4. (*Original*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said electromechanical conversion element comprises a laminated piezoelectric element having piezoelectric materials and electrode materials alternately laminated one upon another.
5. (*Currently Amended*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said elastic member includes a plurality of ~~second-recessed parts~~ cutouts at a plurality of locations thereof for adjusting vibration characteristics of the vibrator ~~formed therein at a plurality of locations thereof~~.
6. (*Original*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said elastic member has at least one supporting part integrally formed thereon, for supporting the vibrator.
7. (*Original*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said electromechanical conversion element excites said elastic member in a plurality of out-of-plane bending vibration modes having different wavelength directions.
8. (*Currently Amended*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said plurality of spaced contact parts are formed in a vicinity of loops of one of the bending vibration modes and in a vicinity of nodes of another one of the bending vibration modes.
9. (*Canceled*)
10. (*Original*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said driven member and said elastic member form a magnetic circuit.
11. (*Currently Amended*) A vibrator comprising:
an elastic member having one surface and another surface, said elastic member having a plurality of spaced contact parts formed on the one surface, said elastic member being formed of a single member; and
an electromechanical conversion element joined to the another surface of said elastic member[[:]],
wherein said electromechanical conversion element excites said elastic member in a plurality of out-of-plane bending vibration modes having different wavelength directions, and

wherein said elastic member has a recessed part formed on the one surface thereof between said plurality of contact parts at least one cutout that extends completely through said elastic member to expose part of said electromechanical conversion element at a location where the another surface of said elastic member is joined to said electromechanical conversion element,

wherein portions of said elastic member adjacent to said cutout form the spaced contact parts,

wherein said at least one cutout is configured to be opposed to a driven member, and

wherein said elastic member is configured to be disposed in contact with the driven member only at said spaced contact parts.

12. (*Currently Amended*) A vibrator according to claim 11, wherein said elastic member is formed from a metal plate material ~~by press punching or by an etching process.~~

13. (*Original*) A vibrator according to claim 11, wherein said electromechanical conversion element comprises a laminated piezoelectric element having piezoelectric materials and electrode materials alternately laminated one upon another.

14. (*Currently Amended*) A vibrator according to claim 11, wherein said elastic member includes a plurality of ~~second recessed parts~~ cutouts at a plurality of locations thereof for adjusting vibration characteristics of the vibrator ~~formed therein at a plurality of locations thereof.~~

15. (*Original*) A vibrator according to claim 11, wherein said elastic member has at least one supporting part integrally formed thereon, for supporting the vibrator.

16. (*Currently Amended*) A vibrator according to claim 11, wherein said plurality of spaced contact parts are formed in a vicinity of loops of one of the bending vibration modes and in a vicinity of nodes of another one of the bending vibration modes.

17. (*Canceled*)

18. (*New*) A vibration wave driven apparatus comprising:
a driven member; and

an elastic member having an electromechanical conversion element joined to one surface thereof,

wherein another surface of said elastic member has a plurality of first ridge parts extending along a driven direction of said driven member and at least one second ridge part connecting said first ridge portions to each other through a plurality of recessed parts,

wherein the plurality of recessed parts are interposed between the plurality of first ridge parts, and the at least one second ridge part is interposed between the two or more recessed parts,

wherein said plurality of first ridge parts are identical in height with the at least one second ridge part, and

wherein said driven member contacts the at least one second ridge part without contacting said first ridge parts.

19. (*New*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 18, wherein three of the recessed parts are arranged side by side in the driven direction of said driven member between two of the first ridge parts, and two of the second ridge parts form boundaries among the three of recessed parts.

20. (*New*) A vibration wave driven apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said electromechanical conversion element excites said elastic member in two out-of-plane bending vibration modes having different wavelength directions to cause said elastic member to make elliptic motions.